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## Current Support Brief

KHRUSHCHEV ORDERS ADDITIONAL IMPORTS  
OF WESTERN EQUIPMENT  
FOR THE HIGH-PRIORITY AGRICULTURAL-CHEMICAL SECTOR

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED  
1999



CIA/RR CB 63-38

17 April 1963

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Research and Reports

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According to a report of 29 March, Premier Khrushchev, during a visit to a Soviet urea fertilizer plant being built in Tula Oblast, stated that construction of urea plants had to be accelerated and that this task would be given the highest priority. 1/ The urea plant visited is one of four being supplied by a Western firm, and Khrushchev, on learning that the firm also had contracted to supply part of the equipment for other Soviet urea plants, ordered that four additional complete plants be purchased instead. Judging from the report, a high priority, already foreshadowed in 1962, now is being given by the USSR to construction of plants producing agricultural chemicals. The purchase of four more plants, if confirmed, will be additional evidence that Soviet equipment and instrument manufacturers are unable to meet the present requirements for the fertilizer industry and that a very sizable portion of the equipment needed to provide the scheduled increases in production of urea during the Seven Year Plan (1959-65) will come from the West. Although the high priority being given the fertilizer industry is unlikely to result in fulfillment of the Soviet goal to produce 35 million tons of mineral fertilizers in 1965, increases in capacity in 1963-65 will be significantly higher than those in 1959-62.

The four plants already ordered by the USSR apparently will have a total capacity of 700,000 to 720,000 tons of urea, or about 45 percent of the 1.6 million tons planned for production in the USSR in 1965. 2/ As of September 1962, construction of the first three of the Western-supplied plants reportedly was behind schedule by periods ranging from 5 months to 1 year, 3/ but all four plants should be in operation well before 1965.

The urea produced in the USSR is to be used predominantly as fertilizer and as animal feed. Urea also can be used in production of plastics and explosives and is a possible starting material in production

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of hydrazine, a storable missile fuel. These nonagricultural uses, however, would be satisfied by a far smaller production of urea than is at present planned in the USSR.

The scheduled increase in production of urea is the result of a decision not only to add to the total volume of fertilizers but also to utilize more concentrated fertilizers. Urea contains about 46 percent nitrogen. As of 1961, Soviet nitrogen fertilizers contained an average of only 30.5 percent nitrogen and probably have not changed appreciably since. The higher nutrient content per unit of weight should permit lower outlays for transportation.

The present Soviet emphasis on the fertilizer industry was foreshadowed in 1962, when a supplementary allocation of investment for the fertilizer sector was announced for that year and an incentives program introduced to stimulate lagging construction and production. 4/ According to data on the progress of the fertilizer industry in 1959-62 and the plan for 1963, however, annual increases of fertilizers in the first 5 years of the Seven Year Plan will have averaged only about 1.5 million tons. Annual increases of 7.5 million tons will therefore be needed in 1964 and 1965 to meet the production goal of 35 million tons in 1965. Although it is highly unlikely that the goal will be attained (and indeed the goal itself may even be lowered), the present emphasis on rapid expansion probably will continue, and increases in capacity in 1963-65 will be significantly higher than those in 1959-62.

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Analyst:

Coord:

Sources:

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- 3.
4. Stroitel'naya gazeta, 9 May 62, p. 1. U.  
Ekonomicheskaya gazeta, 14 Jul 62, p. 2. U.

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